



Communiqué de Presse

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE Office of the Spokesperson

Joint Statement of the Second Session of the United States - Kingdom of Morocco Strategic Dialogue April 4, 2014

At the second session of the United States-Morocco Strategic Dialogue today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Foreign Minister Dr. Salaheddine Mezouar and Secretary of State John Kerry built on the substantial and ambitious roadmap agreed to by His Majesty the King Mohammed VI and President Obama in Washington in November 2013, pledging to use our strong strategic partnership to advance shared priorities of a stable, democratic, and prosperous Maghreb, Africa, and Middle East.

Support for Democratic Reforms

The Secretary reiterated the United States' appreciation for the action and the leadership of His Majesty the King in deepening democracy and promoting economic progress and human development during the last decade. In this context, the Minister and the Secretary discussed the ongoing implementation of Morocco's 2011 constitution and how the United States can support the strengthening of Morocco's democratic institutions, civil society, and a culture of human rights. The Secretary welcomed the Government's endorsement of a law eliminating military tribunals for civilians, another important step in implementing His Majesty the King's vision of Morocco that conforms to international norms and best practices with regards to human rights. The Secretary also noted the United States' Government's continuing interest in the outcome of Morocco's National Dialogue on Civil Society and the development of an enabling environment for dialogue between government and citizen. The Secretary commended the Minister for Morocco's continuing efforts to implement sweeping changes to its asylum and immigration system, with positive implications for legal and illegal migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The two parties reaffirmed their intent to work together to promote human rights globally at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Economic Cooperation

The Minister and the Secretary discussed the benefits of maintaining an attractive business climate for investment in Morocco. They acknowledged the concrete measures undertaken by Morocco to become eligible to join the Open Government Partnership, the importance of Morocco as a trade and investment platform for North and Sub-Saharan Africa, and United States' support to improve the quality and relevance of Morocco's basic education. They lauded the signing of a \$38 million agreement to provide Moroccan youth with the workforce development tools for a better transition from education to employment. They discussed the recently concluded Second United States-Morocco Business Development Conference, which strengthened business-to-business ties in the service of expanding trade and capitalizing on the United States-Morocco Free Trade Agreement, promoting investment, collaborating on energy issues, and encouraging regional economic integration through the establishment of effective partnerships. Both parties look forward to Morocco's hosting the 2014 Global Entrepreneurship Summit before the end of this year and the important opportunity that represents to build a culture of entrepreneurship to create employment opportunities for youth across the region. They welcomed the positive preparatory work for a 2nd Millennium Challenge Corporation compact.

Engagement within Africa

The Secretary underlined the leadership of His Majesty the King to promote social development and economic prosperity within Africa, reaffirmed our desire to work jointly to ensure stability and human development in Africa through a comprehensive and coordinated approach including food security, access to energy, and trade promotion. In this context, the United States Administration looks forward to Morocco's active participation in the United States-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington, DC in August.

Educational and Cultural Cooperation

The Minister and the Secretary discussed further cooperation to promote mutual understanding and dialogue in Morocco and throughout the region. They commended the work of the Moroccan American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange (MACECE), and expressed enthusiasm for the contribution that the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative will make. The Secretary noted that he will be swearing in over 100 new Peace Corps volunteers today, in the latest renewal of a historic and fruitful partnership bringing American youth together with Moroccan citizens in the service of socioeconomic development and mutual understanding. The Minister and the Secretary of State confirmed that strong interfaith cooperation, the promotion of values of moderation and tolerance are key for stability and development in the region. They welcomed the dynamism of the inter-university cooperation and research programs in that field. Both parties encouraged the MACECE to widen its activities and expressed enthusiasm for the contribution that the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative will make.

Security Cooperation

The Minister and the Secretary noted our shared goal of stability and security throughout Africa. They remarked on today's conclusion of the joint exercise African Lion with the participation of

18 countries, reflecting a vision of strengthened cooperation and capacity to provide security to the people of the region. They discussed efforts to find new avenues for civilian security cooperation, including in criminal justice cooperation and efforts to promote the rule of law. The two parties also discussed a joint proposal that would couple United States' and Moroccan counterterrorism expertise in such a way that would facilitate Morocco supporting regional security efforts. They noted Rabat's hosting of the Fifth Global Counterterrorism Forum Coordinating Committee this week as a symbol of that ongoing cooperation.

The Issue of the Western Sahara

The Secretary reaffirmed our commitment to a peaceful, sustainable, mutually agreed-upon solution to the Western Sahara question. The United States' policy toward the Western Sahara has remained consistent for many years. The United States has made clear that Morocco's autonomy plan is serious, realistic, and credible, and that it represents a potential approach that could satisfy the aspirations of the people in the Western Sahara to run their own affairs in peace and dignity. The United States supports the negotiations carried out by the United Nations, including the work of the UN Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General Ambassador Christopher Ross, and urges the parties to work toward a just, lasting and mutually agreed political solution. The two parties affirmed their shared commitment to the improvement of the lives of the people of the Western Sahara. In this regard, Morocco presented the report on the new economic model prepared by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council. The Secretary welcomed the recent actions and initiatives taken by Morocco to continue to protect and promote human rights in the territory, including the growing and important role of the National Council for Human Rights.

Middle East Peace

Secretary Kerry commended the commitment of Morocco to the shared goal of a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He welcomed the contribution of His Majesty the King, including through his chairmanship of the Al-Quds Committee, and the recommendations made by the Committee's 20th Session held this past January.

Conclusion

The Minister and the Secretary closed by emphasizing the broad set of values shared by the United States and Morocco, providing the foundation for even wider cooperation in our strategic partnership. They expressed their intent to continuing following up on the joint agenda which grew out of last November's successful visit of His Majesty the King to Washington. The Secretary thanked the Minister for his invitation to visit Morocco and looks forward to the next session of the Strategic Dialogue in Washington.

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